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THEOLOGY, NEWS AND NOTES

DIVERSITY

Threat or Opportunity?

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Diversity: An Opportunity for Maturation or Threat of Division?

BY EDGAR J. ELLISTON

Looking out over the congregation from the pulpit, Pastor Dave wondered, Is all of this diversity desirable? How can we make it work? How can I effectively serve this congregation?

Dave serves as the senior pastor of a medium-sized church about 40 miles from downtown Los Angeles. Looking out over the congregation, the differences almost overwhelmed him. The dominant "baby-boomers" and "baby-busters" outnumbered both the older and younger people. Differences in education were also striking. Some who had not gone beyond a primary education were sitting among the young professionals who had graduate degrees. The traveling professionals were sitting alongside the homeless and out of work. There, beside a Christian fundamentalist who comments on all of Dave's exegesis, is the person who has been a relativistic "New Ager." As Dave looked at the ethnic diversity he saw mostly Caucasians, but scattered throughout the congregation were African-Americans, Japanese, and second-generation Koreans, Chinese, and Filipinos.

Diversity in the congregation provides multiple links into the . . . community.

The congregation has evangelical noncharismatic roots and yet, looking across the congregation, he can see some of his dearest friends and best leaders who are clearly "Third-Wave." There in the second row is a former drug addict sitting with a vice-squad police officer. Sitting beside the seminary professor is the young family who came to the Lord last week. There in the fourth row is a couple who have opposed the counseling ministry because, according to them, "It is not possible to combine psychology and the Christian faith." And right behind them is a businessman who was delivered from demonization this past week.

Dave remembers a recent Sunday evening when the members of a Christian "band" who perform during the evening worship service were in heated conversation with some older church members. The college-age instrumentalists were frustrated because the volume on their electric guitars had been reduced. The older church members were urging that the worship services be more musically "balanced." Intergenerational diversity continues to demand attention.

The diversity in many urban churches equals or surpasses that of this congregation. How can or should church leaders cope with this growing range of differences? Should diversity be encouraged? Should we try to plant "homogenous unit" churches? How does the "homogenous unit" principle apply? How can one lead and equip others to lead in this kind of context? Is God really pleased with diversity? (Sometimes it appears to simply be the forerunner of chaos.)

If one looks at projected trends, diversity can be expected to increase into the foreseeable future in all the ways Pastor Dave noted. Local migration, economic and political shifts will continue to exacerbate the religious, political, generational, economic, social, and worldview differences in cities, whether they are in Kansas, Kerala, or Cote d' Ivoire. Christians have no choice about the diversity of the communities in which they live. Should the churches reflect this diversity?

The pressure to diversify will certainly increase. Accrediting associations are tightening the diversity standards for higher education. The current "politically correct" position demands diversity. Our legal system is bringing pressure in the workplace, the school, the home, and threatens to force the acceptance of diversity which would not have been known in the recent past. Given the assurance of increased differences in our communities, we can expect both significant opportunities and threats.

As diversity increases, opportunities for ministry and ministry resources multiply. Each person brings a network of relationships with friends, associates, and relatives who provide a new set of ministry possibilities. Each individual in these networks is either a potential resource for ministry or a person the Lord wants to bring into the Kingdom. Diversity in the congregation provides multiple links into the multicultural sectors of the community.

These new ministry opportunities require new worldview worldview differences of both individuals and groups, the establishing and maintaining of unity in the faith remains an ongoing challenge. The threat remains that people will say of others who are different, "They're not my kind of people. Either they or I do not belong here." The differences are compounded by wide-ranging differences in power often resulting in oppressive behavior. Even if division or conflict are avoided, ambiguity will remain in decision-making and program implementation.

These new ministry opportunities require new worldwide shifts in ministry . . .

What can or should be done? Our natural preference to resist diversity both at individual and institutional levels continues. However, should the "homogenous principle" serve to describe what we experience or to prescribe what we should continue? Should church leaders seek to reduce diversity as a matter of strategy or affirm diversity with its attendant risks and opportunities?

To address these and related questions, various leaders from divergent backgrounds have contributed articles for this issue.

George P. Alexander, as an intercultural educator born in Sri Lanka and raised in India, presents a globalized perspective of today's worldwide Christian church. An adjunct professor at both Fuller Seminary and Biola University, Dr. Alexander represents the changing hands of leadership, as American and European leaders are being replaced by non-Western leadership.

Nancey Murphy addresses the problem of dealing with diversity in a postmodern world. Dr. Murphy serves as associate professor of Christian philosophy in Fuller's School of Theology. Her training and experience in the fields of theology and philosophy provide a sound foundation for her insightful article.

Jorge Taylor, associate provost for ethnic and cultural concerns at Fuller Theological Seminary, is a Hispanic African-American pastor and educator.

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The Changing Hands of Leadership

BY GEORGE P. ALEXANDER

As our world becomes steadily smaller through advancements in transportation and communication, the need for more international understanding demands our attention. Many societies are in a state of rapid change, and many of the problems have been attributed to problems of transition. The underlying assumption is that the *traditional* and *modern* are in competition, and in choosing one, the other is lost. Our world changes faster and more profoundly with every passing decade. And at the same time the need, opportunity, and means for evangelizing the world are increasing.

In this article I will address two questions: First, from my ministry perspective as an immigrant church leader, *why is a globalized perspective necessary or useful for ministry today?* Second, *how do I go about bringing a globalized perspective into my ministry?*

As the world cries out for justice and dignity, so do the Christian leaders—who are the future leaders of the worldwide church. Today the missions are not dead, but the leadership is changing hands. Until recently, many churches around the world seemed to believe that pioneer evangelism was the exclusive work of North American or European missionaries.

But, from a historical perspective, the Western church lost its grip on the challenge for world missions at the end of World War II. And ever since that time, its moral mandate and vision for global outreach has continued to fade. Yet most Americans still conceive of missions in terms of light-haired, light-skinned people going to dark-skinned, Third-World nations. Except for the annual "mission appeal" in most churches, many North American believers have lost hope of seeing the Great Commission of Christ fulfilled on a global scale. And although it has been rarely stated, the implication has been that if North American- or Western European-based mission boards weren't leading the way, then it couldn't happen.

However, from a purely statistical point of view, Christianity is a *non-Western* religion. Jesus, a non-Anglo baby born to refugee parents fleeing to Egypt, became the Messiah of the world. All of his disciples were non-

The major cities of the United States are beginning to look as though the world has moved to our very doorstep.

Anglo, and to them he entrusted the Great Commission. This reality has yet to impact the majority of people in the United States, but we will be experiencing it during the final decade of this twentieth century.

The major cities of the United States are beginning to look as though the world has moved to our very doorstep. More than 25 percent of Los Angeles' downtown real estate is owned by Japanese corporations. Americans say they prefer Japanese-built cars because they are more reliable and sensitive to the driver's needs. And many recent statistics point to the probability that the proportion of Christians in the world's population has increased in Asia more than in any other region.

The Methodist Church began in England, but now the world's largest Methodist congregation is in Korea—the Kwang Lim Methodist Church of over 12,000 people, pastored by Kim Sundo. The Presbyterian Church began in Scotland, but now the world's largest Presbyterian congregation is in Korea—the Young Nak Presbyterian Church with over 60,000 members, pastored by Park Chu-Choon.

In India, which no longer permits Western missionaries, more church growth and outreach is happening now than at any point in history! Northeast India was once a land of tribes and headhunters. Today, at least 75 percent of the population is Christian. In Burma, churches among the minority peoples were growing so fast that the Western missionaries were expelled, but the churches among the tribal peoples have kept on growing!

China is another good example of the new realities. When the Communists drove Western missionaries out and closed the churches in 1950, it seemed that Christianity was dead. But today the number of Christians has grown to an estimated 60 million—60 times the size of the church when Western missionaries were driven out!

As America has fallen under the pervasive influence of the affluent society, the spiritual deterioration of the church in the United States has come into question. Such matters as easy divorce and remarriage, uninhibited sexual lifestyles, corruption in business, decline in church membership—all these matters are being viewed with deep concern in churches overseas.

One African friend, reflecting on all this, observed: "America needs to take her missionaries unto herself for awhile and reflect on her own shortcomings, leaving us free to deal with ours."

The Western way of thinking is different than that in many other societies. We in the West are biased toward Western ways of thinking. Such thinking is useful to other societies only to the extent that it can be translated into the culture of that society. The failure to differentiate between the gospel and Western culture has been one of the greatest weaknesses of Western Christian missions. Western missionaries too often have equated the gospel with their own cultural background. This has led them to condemn most native customs and to impose their own customs on Christian converts. Consequently, the gospel has been seen as *Western*. Third-World people have rejected it, not because of the lordship of Christ, but because conversion often has meant a denial of their cultural heritage and social customs.

The power and influence of Christianity's new leadership will be felt in a variety of ways: The top theological schools will be in Asia and Latin America; new questions on theology and praxis will emerge reflecting the social, economic, and political realities of Third-World living; few Anglos will occupy plenary posts at Christian conventions; presidents of denominations will have names that English-speaking Americans cannot pronounce; a European-based reading of church history will take a back seat to other traditions of world Christianity; and television evangelists of all races will be preaching to us in our living rooms. As the stature and glory of the West have been fading, the stature and sense of *self* in the Third World have been growing.

Christian leaders from the West are often stunned by the harsh words of Third-World Christian leaders who reflect on the North American church. Were they, as Westerners, more attuned to the issues of the Third World, they would quickly understand the need for humble listening. The church of the West has been too slow to denounce its complicitous role in the evils of the past. Emerging Christian leaders of the Third World distinguish between Christ and cultural/economic imperialism, and they refuse to cooperate with the latter. As the world cries out

All of us, as Christians, have the option and privilege of locally living out the global implications of our faith.

for justice and dignity, so do these Christian leaders—who are the future leaders of the worldwide church.

DEVELOPING A GLOBALIZED PERSPECTIVE

We need to make a practice of deferring to non-Western opinions and ideas whenever our most basic theological convictions are not at stake. Western wealth and isolation have kept us from understanding the real issues of the Third World. Yet we continue to impose our agenda there. Few international Christian conferences are truly *international*: The programs, invitation lists, and venues are usually controlled by Westerners.

Presidents and professors of America's theological institutions need to acquaint themselves with the views of non-Western theologians. Even most theological schools of mission are not making this obvious adjustment. If seminaries and theological institutions do not choose to change these patterns, a very difficult road toward true partnership lies ahead.

BUILDING BRIDGES IN THE CHURCH

New faces, strange names, different theological concepts. The globalization of the gospel will continue to increase our exposure to people who call themselves *Christian*, but whose ideas and behaviors are different enough from ours to cause us to withdraw, rather than pursue fellowship. Too often we end up labeling people unlike ourselves as "dangerous" or "liberal"—when, really, they are just *different*.

THINKING GLOBALLY, ACTING LOCALLY

Theologies of church growth and strategies of evangelism that are dreamed up in America's suburban churches will soon become irrelevant in the

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Understanding and Valuing Multiethnic Diversity

BY CHARLES H. KRAFT AND MARGUERITE G. KRAFT

An Anglo congregation located in an Asian community had opened its doors for an Asian church to use its facilities. Things were going quite smoothly when the Anglo pastor invited the Asian congregation to join together in worship one Sunday evening each month. After two or three of these services, members of the Asian congregation expressed their discomfort to their pastor: Women were sitting in front of men, the leaders did not handle the Bible with reverence or acknowledge its importance in the sermon, young people were in leadership and the elderly were not heard from. These things made the worship very difficult and uncomfortable. Some Asian leaders were even questioning whether the combined service should continue.

The Anglo pastoral staff was deeply puzzled by the situation. Weren't the Asians pleased that the Anglo congregation had wanted to include them in their worship? The Anglos had *intended* to be gracious. Wasn't this coming across to the Asians? We all worship the same Lord, don't we? And in him, there are no longer Jew or Gentile, male or female, bond or free (Gal. 3:28).

The Asian pastor found it almost impossible to even discuss the uneasiness of his people with the Anglo staff. How could he communicate to them the fact that his people didn't feel honored to be invited into an event sponsored, "owned," and designed for the comfort of another cultural group? True, we are all one in an abstract sense. But worship isn't worship if we are not comfortable.

What the Anglo leaders had neglected (probably quite unconsciously) is a basic principle of intercultural experience—*mutuality*. Mutuality means that things have to go both ways. If one group exposes another to the way they do things, they also need to open themselves up and learn to appreciate the ways of the other group. What was done was not

We need to understand that there is a difference between God's absolute *reality and the* culturally relative *reality around us.*

necessarily wrong. It just was not negotiated *beforehand* in a spirit of respect, with the majority group being particularly sensitive toward helping the minority group become "owners" of the meetings rather than simply observers.

Another Anglo congregation located in a Hispanic community saw the opportunity to offer ESL (English as a Second Language) classes several evenings a week for members of the community. This program was appreciated by the community, but was eventually dropped because of a lack of volunteer teachers from the church.

This case was quite different from the first. In this situation, the pastoral staff and a few of the members of the congregation recognized a need and set about meeting it. So far so good. But they bumped into the problem that the majority of the people in the congregation were too involved in other activities to volunteer their services for this ministry. For many Anglos, churches have become clubs to enjoy rather than bases from which to serve others. Some members of this congregation had learned an important Christian principle—the need for *intentionality* if we are to do God's work. That is, we cannot serve God simply by sitting where we are. We need to exert ourselves intentionally if we are to be obedient. But having learned the necessity of intentionality, the church leaders were unable to find enough people from the church who were committed to this specific ministry.

What the church leadership had failed to do was to lead the congregation into a deeper understanding of the centrality of servanthood in Christianity, and to instruct them on how *servant* ministry accomplishes this goal. An understanding of the needs of the community and the benefits of such a program, both to those who receive and to those who give, requires a special focus. Church leaders need to be intentional about enabling their people to develop this focus. Preparatory sessions could have been offered to members of the congregation who were potential participants in such a program to assure that their involvement would be based on an understanding of the commitment required.

In such sessions, members could have heard from people who have had success in similar programs and from those of different ethnic backgrounds who have profited from such programs. Potential participants need to be shown the benefits of involvement in helping others—but always with an emphasis on having respect for those they assist.

Both of these congregations are commuter congregations rather than community congregations. But both felt the need to try to assist those on the other side of the cultural barrier. The fact that they were started from positions of dominance, however, raised problems that they were not able to surmount. In both cases, their mutuality was suspect and their intentionality insufficient.

These are but two examples of failed attempts to recognize and handle diversity appropriately. But to be fair to these church leaders, where would they have had an opportunity to learn to handle such situations? Seminaries typically offer little in their pastoral training curricula to enable present or future church leaders to handle such contemporary problems. At Fuller, a trickle of theology students do take courses in intercultural communication and anthropology in the School of World Mission. And those few discover that the ability to make the most of their seminary training relevant—both to those from other societies and to their own people—is enhanced by the insights of such courses.

At each of Fuller's schools, a few of those training for pastoral ministry put themselves out enough to make friends with people from other cultures. These individuals often gain considerable insight into what it's like to be a minority person. But this is hit or miss, even on campuses such as ours which have large numbers of international students.

Increasingly, though, it is not going to be enough to leave this important area to *hit* or *miss*. Traditional training for Anglo leaders assumes and stresses homogeneity, uniformity, order, and regularity. The reality of cultural diversity, however, introduces complications in each of these areas. The Hispanic educator Arturo Madrid states well the problem existing in Anglo society: "Diversity is

We need to develop an understanding of the values and ways in which people from another society view the world around them.

desirable only in principle, not in practice. Long live diversity—as long as it conforms to *my* standards, to *my* mindset, to *my* view of life, to *my* sense of order."

Unfortunately, being Christian doesn't erase either diversity or ethnocentric attitudes toward other groups. Yet the church should be leading the way in bridging the gap between diverse groups of people. God seems to value diversity, and Christians need to be expressing God's acceptance of ethnic differences. But this will require special effort since it is natural to associate with *our* kind of people and only accept others if they conform to *our* standards and lifestyle (at least while they are in *our* churches). *The problem of valuing and dealing with diversity as God does lies within us.*

We need to do the following to overcome our internal problems:

- We need to understand that there is a difference between God's *absolute* reality and the *culturally relative* reality around us. God is absolute, beyond relativity, and he has absolute standards that all people, everywhere, are accountable for. He is, therefore, beyond and outside of any culture, neither endorsing nor condemning any cultural system in its totality. We, however, live within one of several thousand varieties of equally respectable cultural systems in the world today. We, therefore, see dimly and know only in part (1 Cor. 13:12). Such cultural systems are the products of humans trying to make sense of, and cope with, the vagaries of life. None of these systems is perfect. Each has its strengths and weaknesses. But each culture has a perspective on reality that we can learn from. And throughout Scripture, we see God respecting and working in terms of each of the varieties of people represented, according to the principle Paul articulates in 1 Cor. 9:20-22: to Jews, a Jew; to Gentiles, a Gentile; to the weak, weak.

God, then, invites people of every cultural system to come to him and live for him within their system. They don't need to become like us, though they may profit if we respectfully teach them something that they need (such as our language), so they can function more effectively among Anglos. The cultural differences are to remain, even though we all are called to live lives of love for God and each other within and transcending these differences. Anytime those differences result in differences in power, however, God expects us to apply at the cultural level the same principle Scripture teaches

us at the individual level: *Those in power are to be careful to use that power for the benefit of (never to oppress or hurt) the weaker ones.*

■ We need to develop an awareness of our own cultural programming that mistakenly teaches us to feel that we are *right* in our values, lifestyle, thinking, and therefore *better* than those around us. When we are accepted by God within our way of life, it is tempting to fall, as the Jewish Christians did (Acts 15), into the temptation of feeling that our ways are the right ways. We need to understand, for example, that people who don't read are not inferior to those who do. Nor are those people who don't speak English or who have different authority patterns than ours.

Unfortunately, the Anglo-American worldview programs us to believe that all differences are to be evaluated *vertically*. Things and people, we are taught, cannot be different and still be thoroughly equal. We see cultural differences, then, as signaling inferiority rather than as products of the marvelous creativity that God has built into human beings. However, cultural differences are not mistakes to be stamped out, but alternate, creative, and valid approaches to reality. As such, the differences and the people who practice them are to be respected. The mutuality principle needs to be based on genuine respect for the way of life of another people.

■ We need to develop an understanding of the values and ways in which people from another society view the world around them. Learning about other cultural backgrounds takes time, interest, and commitment.

It is natural to prefer to spend our time and energy with people who are like us, who understand us, and who don't question our decisions. It is a greater risk and challenge to push ourselves intentionally out into the community around us. Yet those who *have* done that have discovered that activities which enable us to *know* people of another culture and which allow us to

We need to develop an awareness of our own cultural programming that mistakenly teaches us to feel that we are . . . better *than those around us..*

serve those not in power provide great riches and growth.

The resources available to carry out these steps include courses and reading that deal with cross-cultural differences and relationships. The most effective resource is, however, *friendship*. There is no substitute for getting to know and genuinely entering into the life experience of one or more representatives of another society. Sitting with people—respectfully and sympathetically listening to them, with a desire to learn how the world looks from their point of view—can be a richly rewarding experience. It is God who gave *their* ancestor, (just as he did ours), the creativity to produce a unique way of life—a way of life that God delights in. It is our privilege, if we take it, to bless and encourage people from other societies and, in the process, to enrich our own lives. Such contact also brings inner spiritual growth because *differences* help us to begin to examine our faith more carefully. If we are respectful and intentional about it, we can help others, honor God, and grow ourselves by accepting and serving those on the other side of a cultural boundary. ■

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Dealing with Postmodern Diversity

BY NANCEY MURPHY

Increasingly these days one hears the term *postmodern*. What is *postmodernity*? Etymology suggests that it is that which comes after the *modern;* but how can this be? Doesn't *modern* simply mean up-to-date, current? Over the past ten years or so, observers of various aspects of culture have noted, first, that the *Modern* Period has certain unifying or identifying features, and second, that many of these features are in the process of change. So *modern* has come to be used not to refer to the up-to-date, but rather to designate a period in history—a period following the Medieval, the Renaissance, and the Reformation periods. It makes sense, then, to call the period that comes next—the period just now beginning—the *Postmodern* Period, since we do not know enough about it yet to give it a more descriptive name.

It is hazardous to write about postmodernity at this point, since we are only on the edge of it. Modern presuppositions have been thoroughly criticized and rejected by many. The alternative ways of thinking that will shape the next period are just now being formulated. Nonetheless, I shall describe changes in several aspects of culture that have been seen to mark the transition from Modern to Postmodern: in *philosophy,* in *political structures,* and in *architecture.*

I begin with philosophy, because philosophy itself seeks to come to terms with the most basic patterns of thought in any age—patterns that are exemplified in other disciplines and cultural projects. I also mention changes in societal structures and in architecture—the former because it allows us to recognize a tension in postmodern ideals regarding diversity, and the latter because it provides a fitting visual representation of that tension. I end with tentative applications for church leaders.

MODERN AND POSTMODERN PHILOSOPHY

An outstanding characteristic of modern philosophy has been its preoccupation with questions of

All human reason is conditioned by its place in history.

knowledge: What can we know? How do we know it is true? Can we really know anything at all? This last question is one no one would think to ask except for the fact that *moderns* have had very high standards for what counts as knowledge. The modern ideal equated knowledge with certain knowledge, and especially with universal knowledge. That is, what counts as knowledge is general theories, timeless principles—not the particular, the time-bound, the local. In a phrase, says philosopher Stephen Toulmin, "General principles were in, particular cases were out."[1] Or, to put it differently, modern thought began with "the flight from authority." Jeffrey Stout characterizes modernity as the attempt to ground knowledge on universal human reason rather than on the particularities of the inherited (Christian) tradition, as had been done in the Middle Ages.[2]

Both Toulmin and Stout attribute the modern drive for certitude and universality to sectarian strife following the Reformation. Ethics, politics, and knowledge in general could no longer be based on the tradition, for the tradition itself was splintered into fragments—fragments undergirding warring camps.

If the foregoing is true, we should expect the end of modernity to be characterized by the end of the quest for certitude and for a starting point in universal human reason. In fact, philosophers now recognize that all human reason is conditioned by its place in history. In other words, all knowledge is tradition-dependent; there is no universal starting point outside of history, outside of particular cultures. The ultimate critique of the modern rejection of tradition is to recognize that the *modern* project itself is but one tradition among many, conditioned by particular historical circumstances.

The plurality of competing traditions has become widely recognized. A critical issue (perhaps *the* critical issue) for our point in history is what to make of this diversity. The typical response of one steeped in modern thought is to see this situation as entailing relativism: If there are no absolutes *above* these competing traditions, there is no way to ascertain the Truth. This conclusion causes dismay for some; others (for example, deconstructionist literary theorists) promote it as a form of liberation.[3]

A genuine postmodern response to diverse traditions is to call into question the modern attempt to escape from all tradition. If human reasoning fails, across the board, to fit the reigning theories of knowledge,

then it may be better to call those theories into question than to pronounce judgment against all human reasoning. Thus, philosophers such as Thomas Kuhn and Alasdair MacIntyre have begun to develop theories of rationality that take account of the role of tradition in a positive way. As MacIntyre says, without a tradition one is morally and intellectually bankrupt.[4] Yet not all traditions are equal. Intellectual history is a history of the rise and development of traditions, of the problems they encounter and either overcome or fail to overcome. It is often the competition between two or more traditions that brings about intellectual progress—either dramatic improvement in one tradition, which then wins out over its rivals, or the blending of two previously independent traditions into a new and stronger one. The history of Western Christianity can usefully be viewed in this light: its emergence from the Judaic tradition; its blending first with the Neoplatonic tradition, then the Aristotelian; the emergence of rival traditions at the Reformation; its interaction with the tradition of Modern Enlightenment rationalism; and today its encounter with world religions.

To sum up: The recognition of the tradition-dependence of knowledge can be viewed from a modern standpoint as capitulation to relativism, or can instead be the spur to new theories of knowledge that begin with an appreciation for the role of tradition in human life, and go on to deal with the issue of evaluating competing traditions. This move is essentially to overturn one of the most basic assumptions of modern thought—the ideal of universal reason—and so to inaugurate a new era in philosophy.

MODERN AND POSTMODERN POLITICAL ORDERS

From the point of view of political theory, the outstanding feature of the Modern Period has been the dominance of the nation state. The Modern era began with the creation of separate, independent, sovereign states, each organized around a particular nation, with its own language and culture, maintaining a government that was legitimated as expressing the national will or interests. [5] Currently, some note that the multinational corporation is becoming the dominant cultural institution. "They are a new form

Progress toward the truth will best be made by honest and self-conscious dialogue among traditions . . .

of 'governmental' control with relative independence from the state, that feeds upon the differences of cultures and peoples. . . . [They are] particularly well suited for postmodern culture." [6] One pervasive effect of the rise of the multinational corporation, with its worldwide markets and communications, is the homogenization of culture.

Here we encounter a tension in the emerging postmodern world: Economic and social trends are moving toward the breakdown of traditional societies, toward mixing and homogenizing cultural elements. At the same time, important philosophical currents suggest that intellectual integrity depends on the integrity of those traditions—on keeping them intact.

MODERN AND POSTMODERN ARCHITECTURE

A recent style of architecture called *moderne* produced anonymous, timeless, indistinguishable buildings. These "glass boxes," alike in Tokyo, Moscow, Los Angeles, aptly represent the Modern Period's quest for the universal and timeless. *Postmodern* architecture reintroduces "elements of decoration, local color, historical reference."[7] This move well represents postmodern tension or ambivalence regarding diversity, for the features providing local color and historical reference are not functional, but are instead playful decorations. For example, Greek columns may be used in designing a skyscraper, but they play no role in the structure of the building. It is as if the buildings themselves are asking: Do we really need these traditional elements?

QUESTIONS FOR CHURCH LEADERS

Two questions emerge from the foregoing glance at postmodernity. First, if ancient "architectural-features-turned-to-decorations" question the value of inherited traditions, do the vestigial decorative steeples on suburban churches express similar questions about the

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Equipping Leaders for a Diverse, Multicultural Church

BY JORGE J. TAYLOR

Almost every day you read about it. It's in the daily news. It's on television. What is this new reality? *The increasingly diverse multicultural society in which we live.* Just a few weeks ago, I read the following statistics in the July issue of *ACCESS*, a newsletter for recruiting and retaining students of color.

By the year 2000, more than half of college-age students will be people of color.

Within 15 years, people of color will make up more than 50 percent of the populations of California, Florida, New York, and Texas.

In the 1980s, the U.S. population increased by 9.8 percent. During the same period, the African-American population increased by 13.2 percent, the Native-American population increased by 37.9 percent, the Asian population increased by 107.8 percent, and the Hispanic population increased by 53.6 percent.

The July 31, 1992 issue of the *Los Angeles Times* reported: *Los Angeles has become the immigrant capital of the world: 27 percent of the residents in Los Angeles County are foreign-born compared with the national norm of 10 percent. 38 percent of those older than 4 years of age speak a foreign language at home. Of this 38 percent, 26 percent speak Spanish, 7 percent speak an Asian or Pacific Island language.*

As a consequence of this increasingly diverse multicultural population, most schools and businesses also will have a multiculturally diverse constituency. Churches, too, will have diverse, multicultural congregations.

Sometimes we become so busy that we are not aware of what is taking place within our own city or church. It is quite possible that many people are not aware of the large number of culturally diverse people living in their own community. Christ had to remind his disciples: "Lift up

When a church is able to worship, celebrate, and fellowship together with people from other cultures, this becomes a testimony of unity.

your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest" (John 4:35). If pastors will lift up their eyes, they will see a large number of people from different ethnic groups seeking churches where they can worship and become a vital part of the congregation. Jerry Appleby expresses the phenomenon of this increased multicultural population quite well in the title of his book *Missions Have Come Home to America*[1] And the interesting fact is that this is a wave of *God.* It would be very difficult to explain this phenomenon apart from the fact that God is bringing these people to America. Churches that take the time to equip leaders and to develop an environment in which people from other ethnic groups can feel comfortable will receive many new members in their congregations.

HOW CAN A LOCAL CHURCH EQUIP ITS LEADERS FOR A DIVERSE, MULTICULTURAL MINISTRY?

There are several ways in which churches can prepare their leaders for such a ministry. Churches may form a small group of leaders who are culturally sensitive and are interested in working with people from other cultures. Someone who has had experience in a multicultural situation could address the leaders on a number of topics that will equip them to work with people of other cultures. Another way of equipping leaders is to send them to a seminary or one of any of a number of places that are offering courses in cultural sensitivity.

Following are some key areas in which leaders should be prepared so they can assist their local church that is becoming increasingly diverse and multicultural.

- **Cultivating cultural sensitivity.** Leaders who want to work in a multicultural church must become sensitive to the values, customs, and expressions of other cultures, specifically the cultures of those attending their own church.
- **Possessing an identity awareness.** Anyone interested in working with people of different cultures must be aware of their *own* cultural heritage. Failure to recognize one's own cultural identity may be a barrier in working with people of other cultures. McGoldrick, Pierce and Giordano in their book *Ethnicity and Family Therapy*[2] state: "The work of Klein with Jews, Cobbs with blacks, and Giordano and Riotta-Sirey with Italians demonstrated the fact that if people are

secure in their identity, then they can act with greater freedom, flexibility, and openness to others of different cultural backgrounds. However, if people receive negative or distorted images of their ethnic background or learn values from the larger society that conflict with those of their family, they often develop a sense of inferiority and self-hate that can lead to aggressive behavior and discrimination toward other ethnic groups."

■ **Understanding the worldview of other cultures.** Lyman Reed in his book, *Preparing Missionaries for Intercultural Communication: A Bicultural Approach*,[3] says: "The worldview of a people reflects their basic assumptions, values, and understanding regarding life and the world in which they live. Worldview considerations pertain to the areas of time, space, causation (origins), the supernatural, and interpersonal relationships."

■ **Learning tolerance.** If people need tolerance to live peacefully within their own culture, then it's understandable that they will also need to develop tolerance as they invite those from other cultures to share in their worship experience.

■ **Developing empathy.** If one can learn to put oneself in the situation of a person from a different culture, this becomes a tremendous help in developing the kind of environment in which people can feel comfortable and desirous of becoming a part of that group.

■ **Becoming persons of prayer.** Prayer is always very necessary, and it is vital to the Christian life. The church membership should be in prayer as it decides which cultural group it wants to invite into its fellowship. It is also important for the church leaders to pray for understanding, for improved communication, and for mutual acceptance.

Leaders must have an awareness of barriers to cultural relationships. Appleby, in his book, mentions eight barriers to cross-cultural evangelism in American culture. Following are some of the barriers which affect church leaders in their efforts to work with people of different

Many people are not aware of the large number of culturally diverse people living in their own community.

cultures: language, values, social class, pace and motivation , forms of government, anti-city bias, geographic priorities, and lack of racial understanding.

To briefly comment on three of these:

Language. Most people from a minority group want to understand and speak the language of the dominant culture, but this can sometimes be very difficult for them. If leaders are aware of this problem and are patient with the person learning the new language, it will provide a great incentive for the language student. When one finds a kind mentor, it becomes less difficult to learn a new language.

Social class. Many times a person's social status becomes an immovable barrier in a diverse, multicultural church. This has to do with the way one speaks, how one dresses, even the kind of food one eats. Most minorities in this country do not belong to the upper-middle class, so churches whose congregations have a large number of people who are "upwardly mobile" need to take the initiative to greet and talk with those from other cultures.

Lack of racial understanding. This has to do with sensitivity and understanding the worldview of another person. For example, some people believe that all Hispanic-Americans are the same, that all African-Americans are the same, and that all Chinese are the same. But, of course, this is not so. The best way to learn about different racial and cultural groups is by fellowshipping together.

As church leaders study and discuss other barriers, they can turn them into *bridges* which will increase cultural and racial understanding.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A CHURCH EQUIPS ITS LEADERS FOR A DIVERSE, MULTICULTURAL MINISTRY?

Several things will happen. These leaders will become a bridge over which diverse, multicultural groups can find access into the church fellowship. These leaders will also become interpreters of their own culture to the new group. Finally, these leaders will become examples to the rest of the congregation as to what they can do in their attempt to become one body of Christians enjoying fellowship and communion together.

When this happens, multicultural people will have more freedom to bring their own cultural contributions into the worship service, making it a richer experience for *all*. Such a church then becomes an example of what heaven will be like, when people from every nation, race, and ethnic group will gather to worship the King of kings.

When a church is able to worship, celebrate, and fellowship with people from other cultures, this becomes a testimony of unity to a world that is divided in so many ways. It also becomes a partial realization of Christ's prayer, *"I do not ask in behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may be one, even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I will be in Thee, that they may also may be in Us; that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me."* (John 17: 20, 21 NASB). Such a church becomes a tremendous testimony of the power of the gospel when people from different cultures and ethnic groups worship and celebrate together Christ's death, resurrection, and soon return. Undoubtedly, this unity will also become a means of winning many new people to Christ.

I long to see more churches in which people from various cultures feel free to worship together, because their leaders have been equipped to enable their diverse congregations to make the transition and learn how to worship and fellowship as one in Christ. ■

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Coping as a Minority Female Leader

BY YOUNG LEE HERTIG

Anyone who has gone through adolescence in Asia would remember the dread of wearing uniforms to school with uniformly short hair. Selected student-body members stood at the school gate in the morning in order to check student uniforms and hair

One of the best ways to examine our own bias is through exposure to different cultures.

length. Often, in the case of borderline hair length, they would literally measure the student's hair to make sure it was short enough. School policy made sure that no one stood out—that everyone looked the same. Any student who deviated from the norm was punished. (We looked so boring and colorless in our white tops and dark skirts!)

Even though students inwardly sought creativity through reading and writing poetry and novels (and listening to music), outwardly, creativity was not allowed.

We all have innate desires to express who we are in unique ways and also to belong to a community in which we feel accepted and understood. No one wants to be perceived as part of a *wholesale* deal.

Diversity is a natural, God-given quality. However, prejudice and injustice arise when conformity is demanded and when diversity is perceived as a problem. A previous experience with a certain ethnic group obscures one from seeing a *particular* ethnic person.

I learned about how prejudice and economics go hand in hand during my first encounter with the world of real estate. Here in America, the ethnic makeup of a location is blatantly associated with the value of property in the area. The value of property seems higher than the value of the people of certain ethnic groups. We are in the *perception* war. Who decides and controls the way a person or a group is perceived? Much of our perception of ourselves and others is neither deliberate nor conscious. Our unexamined cultural grid is considered the norm.

A Korean Buddhist monk, Won Hyo, wanted to find the truth in life and decided to wander. One black night, he ended up on a bleak mountain. He was very thirsty and looked for water. He touched something like water in a round basket and drank it all. Its sweet taste satisfied his thirst. He fell asleep next to where he found the drink. The sunshine woke him up in the morning only to show him that the tasty liquid from the night before was not water in a basket but

dark fluid in a skull. The moment he saw what he drank the previous night, he became sick.

Depending on our situation, we may see the same object or subject differently. What seems sweet to us may really be bitter; what seems bitter to us may really be sweet. All of life is tainted by perception. This is why we all need to remain constantly humble and to be repeatedly reminded of the simple truth that we see our reality through a glass darkly. Many times, what we choose to see is not reality.

Leaders in the global village face a barrage of perceptions. Being a leader in our technological and fast-paced society is difficult for any modern person. However, it is incorrect to assume that everyone's experience in leadership is the same. With this in mind, I want to express what it is like to be a groundbreaker as a *tri-marginal* leader at Fuller (a female, a minority, and a new faculty member). There are no "givens."

The joy of being understood without detailed explanation is uncommon:

Asian-American women live in tension between several "worlds"—between Asia and the United States, between tradition and contemporary life, between religious institutions and secular society. . . . In neither the United States nor in Asia do most people live with this multicultural tension; they relate to only one set of cultural values, which they may accept or reject. The Asian-American experience, by way of contrast, is difficult to define, and does not fit into categories set up by the "majority" (Naomi Southard and Rita Nakashima Brock).

Problems in a diverse community often come from the oversimplification of human complexity. The three dimensions of being human—"like *all* others," "like *some* others," and "like *no* other"—are very important factors for everyone living in diversity (David Augsburger). The universal, cultural, and individual dimensions in human beings are interdependent. Augsburger rightfully stresses:

Only when the universal is clearly understood can the cultural be seen distinctively and the individual traits respected fully; only when the person is prized in her or his uniqueness can the cultural matrix be seen clearly and the universal frame be assessed accurately. The universal unites us as humans, the cultural identifies us with significant persons, and the individual affirms our identity."

The three dimensions of being human—'like all *others,' 'like* some *others,' 'like* no *other'—are very important factors for everyone living in diversity.*

When any one of these three dimensions is missing, our humanness is being violated. The peril of imperialism—sexism, racism, and classism—blinds the personal dimension. No human being wants to be the object of *wholesale bias* based on unjust categories. When the universal nature of humanness is ignored, and the cultural and personal aspects are magnified, we feel like an island in a sea of the dominant people group. If our cultural and individual distinctives are overlooked in the name of *universality*, we fall into nationalism. Christian leadership must constantly check and recheck its course by balancing and appreciating the three dimensions above without exclusively emphasizing any one. In Carlyle Marney's words: *Too narrow a view of anything results in prejudiced thinking and acting.*

Christian leadership involves a commitment toward recovering lost humanity through an ongoing examination of our own comfort zones ("isms") and movement toward mutual respect. When the burden of understanding is one-sided, the mono-culturalism perception lopsides the reality.

"As I understand it," said the American Indian [to one of the Puritan Fathers], "you propose to civilize me."

"Exactly."

"You want to get me out of the habit of idleness and teach me to work."

"That is the idea."

"And then lead me to simplify my methods and invent things to make my work lighter."

"Yes."

"And after that I'll become ambitious to get rich, so that I won't have to work at all."

"Naturally."

"Well what's the use of taking such a roundabout way of getting just where I started from? I don't have to work now" (Carol Lee Sanchez).

The contrast in perception between this American-Indian and a Puritan Father exposes both party's deep worldview. Awareness of this contrast will help both persons understand each other's culture better.

One of the best ways to examine our own bias is through exposure to different cultures.

To backtrack for a moment:

TRANSITIONS

Everywhere looked the same when I first crossed the Pacific Ocean in 1980 and reached my destination—the Twin Cities in Minnesota. One of the most difficult aspects of being in a new place or position is the absence of memories which connect one with the people and the place. When I first arrived in the United States, I could not associate those beautiful cities with any memories. The cities were like mere pictures without stories. Suddenly, I faced my personal vacuum of history and memory. I had taken these things for granted all my life.

No place reminded me of special meals like a bowl of hot noodles with spicy *Kimchi* on a chilly evening with special friends. Not until I left my own home ground could I realize how marginal I was as a pilgrim here on earth. In the midst of learning to deal with the challenges of marginality, I began to truly appreciate my *own* culture as well as my *new* cultural experience. God was preparing me to become a minority female leader.

THE CHALLENGE

The hardest challenge as a minority female leader lies in the burden of creating new categories in the minds of both the majority and the minority groups. A minority female leader does not fit into her own cultural group nor into the dominant group, especially when she happens to be progressive and assertive. This alienates the minority person in terms of having to identify with both the dominant and minority groups. A minority leader is additionally alienated if she is a female. Kierkegaard empathically describes the woman's stigma:

"The misfortune of women is that at a given moment they are all-important, while the next day they are completely unimportant" (Gutierrez).

The criteria of evaluating women's leadership varies situationally. For instance, for most Americans, the image of leadership is still masculine and white. The feminine image is not yet fully legitimate. Furthermore, the *minority* female is not even associated with leadership in the minds of most people.

Once we see ourselves in others and others in ourselves . . . our perceptions become enlarged, and we realize that we are all marginal.

Hilary M. Lips describes the dominance of images and how they marginalize minority images:

Most likely, the image is influenced by the person's tendency to define "typical" with reference to the self and the people most visible in the environment.

A student stumbled into my office one day, looked around, and asked, "Whose office is this?"

"My office," I replied.

He asked again as if I did not understand his English: "I mean, which *professor's* office is this?"

"Do you mind if *I* am a professor?" I thought to myself.

The image of gray hair, white skin, a weighty look, and thick glasses are typical images of professors. If you lack these typical images, you leave shock waves and are reminded of your own marginality. One of the biggest barriers faced in a diverse community is the dominance of these typical images in the minds of the people who are shaped by the majority rule.

Whether I like it or not, my presence as a minority female leader carries with it the message of *change*. This is both difficult and exciting. *Tension presupposes risk, but it is a game that must be played* (Ellul).

While *male* leaders do not have to struggle switching gears from the man's world to the woman's in the workplace, *female* leaders *do*. Categories which should be neutral such as gender and ethnicity carry symbolic power of status and class.

Working in a male-dominant world can be exhausting at times for the relational female who stresses nurturing. Pervasively male institutions tend to value the task and devalue relational building. Female leaders who assimilate into a man's world often learn to depreciate positive feminine qualities in order to fit into the mainstream and "climb up the ladder." This breaks the balance of nature in the way God created both male and female in God's image.

In addition, the electronic "disease" of our modern world causes people to *run* faster, which consequently harms our physical health. As humans, we have a need to be holistic in our highly compartmentalized, professionalized environments.

THE UNIVERSALITY OF MARGINALITY

Ever since the eviction from the Garden of Eden, *everyone* has been marginal. The problem is that many people are not aware of the fact that we are *all marginal* here on earth. An African-

American student on campus turned my attention to the fact that, in her words, I am the only "woman of color" on the faculty. (I was too busy coping with my *own* reality to notice this.)

That reality involved a transition from student to faculty status in 1992. It was quite a shift. A *rite of passage* would have eased that jump. As a first-year "newly hatched" faculty member, I coped by accepting that I was a beginner in this new position and by calling myself the "rookie of the year." I was not only giving myself permission to be where I was, but was also trying to set limits of expectation.

The difficulties involved in my transition were eased by some very special people of God who operate not out of worldly power categories but out of the Kingdom of God. They are the ones who take time to listen to different stories rather than to quickly label someone with ascribed status. They take time to get to know a person before hastily *pricing* him or her. They know that they are also fellow pilgrims marching together on the road with those who are more visibly marginal. They are the ones who are not afraid to live with tension.

Ellul stresses the need for respecting the voice of the minority through dialogue. He states that dialogue "is coherent affirmation of differences and common measures."

In this article I have tried to share some of my stories, because I myself have been empowered by the stories of others. As we share our stories together, we experience *community*. The power of the story lies in the connection of a particular story to the universal dimension, connecting individual, local stories with universal human experience.

The movie production of Amy Tan's novel, *The Joy Luck Club,* gave me a powerful experience, even while waiting in line. A diverse group of people (not just Asian-Americans) came to see this movie even though there were no famous motion picture personalities starring in it. As the audience laughed and wept together, the typical stereotypes of Asian-Americans broke down. It connected all the audience with the three dimensions of humanness: *universal, cultural,* and *personal.* This is why the audience applauded and still sat in their seats even after the movie was over.

Once we see ourselves in others and others in ourselves through our shared stories, our perceptions become enlarged, and we realize that we are *all marginal.* This enlargement of perception through mutual affirmation opens the way for the building of *community* in diversity. This is the biggest challenge and joy of being a minority female leader in a diverse community. ■

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Ministry Insights from Latin America

BY JOHN W. HALL, JR.

Modern shopping centers, fancy boutiques, stylishly dressed people, high-tech equipment, and expensive cars—these are usually not the images North Americans associate with Latin America. Backward and underdeveloped probably represent the usual picture when reference is made to life "south of the border." Add superstition and fanaticism to that caricature. Complexity and diversity, however, are among the few *valid* generalizations that can be made about Latin America.

Evangelicals are aware of another current scene in Latin America: The church is growing rapidly—at least faster than in many other world areas. Although some churches are troubled by decline in regular church attendance, increasing church vagrancy, and outright apostasy, many do experience healthy and exemplary ministry patterns. But can such patterns provide meaningful insights for churches elsewhere? Do Latin American churches confront similar challenges faced by highly industrialized and pluralistic societies? A summary of the church's context in Latin America should satisfy questions of relevance. Hopefully, significant ministry patterns in Latin America will also be worth testing in other contexts.

THE SOCIO-RELIGIOUS CONTEXT

The modern way of life, with its materialistic perspective, is no longer foreign to Latin Americans. Enticed by the prospect of a better life, a significant proportion of the 145 million people crowding Latin America's cities fled impoverished rural areas only to have their hopes and dreams dashed. Limited job and educational opportunities, soaring violence, and social neglect are some of the "facts of life" immigrants discover in the city. Access to drugs, shantytowns, street children, and loss of values are other urban realities in Latin America's cities.

During this past decade, much of the economic, health, and educational progress made during previous decades in Latin America was lost. The belief that

A significant sector of the [Latin American] church has accepted responsibility for its own theological understanding.

things would eventually be better, at least for one's own children, has faltered. Contrary to traditional family values, a considerable proportion of mothers now find that they must work outside the home to keep up with their family's basic needs. Urban newcomers and old timers alike experienced tremendous social and economic frustration during the 1980s, in what Latin American analysts consider to be the "lost decade."

Ethnic and cultural diversity is also becoming more visible in Latin America. While native peoples remained in the hinterlands they were easier to ignore. Today, as part of the swelling tide of urban immigrants, their past neglect is being transferred to the educational, health, and social institutions of the city.

Evangelicals continue to work in a Roman Catholic context, albeit open hostility is not so obvious as it once was. But Catholicism is changing in Latin America, for the better. Skeptics suspect it is no more than strategic renewal in an attempt to lessen desertion—that it is simply a facelift without any meaningful relationship with Jesus Christ. Nonetheless, revitalization in the Roman Catholic Church is evidenced by increased Bible study, multiplication of prayer groups, a renewed liturgy which gives greater attention to Christ, a more intelligible and practical exposition of the Word, and willingness, at times, to fellowship with evangelicals.

Together with numerical growth, the church in Latin America is growing in other ways. A significant sector of the church has accepted responsibility for its own theological understanding. This conceptual growth has also developed a new sense of urgency to evangelize and minister holistically in its immediate context, as well as beyond its frontiers. Mission has been reinterpreted holistically to the extent that evangelical participation in the political arena is now encouraged—such as sponsorship of child care, educational projects, vocational training, drug-abuse and alcoholism clinics and counseling, and even housing projects.

MINISTRY INSIGHTS

In separate studies of Protestant and evangelical population growth in Latin America in 1990,

David Stoll and David Martin came to several similar conclusions. Besides the people's response to the gospel message, they recognized that many became converts because they felt evangelical faith had worthwhile things to offer: a new extended family, emotional support, deliverance from evil powers, a renewed *fiesta,* guidance in the face of uncertainty, and the expectation that a meaningful social existence could be achieved. My own research during the past ten years confirms those observations.

Several specific ministry styles have been found to bear significantly on the effectiveness of the church's ministry in the urban context in Latin America; I suspect they may also be important elsewhere. Of those, I will briefly present the following ministry patterns: directive pastoral leadership, participatory and dynamic worship, the multiplication of church groups, and the establishment of local training programs.

■ Directive Pastoral Leadership

There is no confusion about pastoral leadership in larger urban churches in Latin America: Pastors *lead.* Pastors are not tentative, nor are they passive about establishing the spiritual direction for their congregations. They act on their vision by setting goals for their church, by informing and motivating their congregation, and they demonstrate their expectation that the people will follow by training them to accomplish those objectives.

The biblical image of a shepherd who guides and cares for his sheep is the primary pastoral leadership model. Since pastors know the way to the pasture where their sheep should feed, they believe it is their obligation to lead them there.

But true leadership does not coerce, neither does it coax. It guides and motivates. Spiritual dynamics must be added to directivity for effective spiritual leadership.

Pastors of growing churches need to develop *followership* in their congregations by teaching and motivating them. This is far more than telling people what they ought to do. The kind of directive leadership, portrayed in

As spiritual leaders, pastors should . . . direct and motivate people to those areas of ministry in which they can make the greatest contribution

Scripture, that unfolds God's mysteries and summons people is intimated here. Concurrently, however, directive leadership assumes the priestly role of instructing and encouraging people to act faithfully. Discipleship is provided accordingly so that the congregation can *indeed* follow.

The democratic orientation of modern society is affirmed by providing opportunities for ministry, witness, participation in worship, and the prospect of being incorporated at the leadership level. But many larger churches in Latin America do not believe that everyone should be involved in decision-making at every level. Democratic values are not necessarily affirmed by congregational participation in policy or administrative decisions, according to Pastor David, shepherd of a rapidly growing church of about 800 people. He explained that democracy of that kind simply does not work in the church. "Besides, it is not biblical," he added. The biblical pattern is an inclusive use of spiritual gifts—participatory ministry—but of limited authority in decision-making.

In this light, it was instructive to learn that members of smaller Latin American churches were not at all hesitant to claim participation in preaching and teaching ministries, whereas in larger churches, members expected their pastors to perform these particular tasks. Only such ministries as counseling, exhortation, visitation, service, and so forth, were considered to be legitimate areas in which the congregation should participate. But, obviously, directive pastoral leadership includes preaching and teaching as well.

Leadership within the church should not be a closed domain. It cannot be limited to the pastor or a small group of church officials. Pastors and churches should discover how to guide their members' participation according to their spiritual gifts, dedication, and interest. As spiritual leaders, pastors should exercise the prerogative to direct and motivate people to those areas of ministry in which they can make the greatest contribution.

■ Participatory and Dynamic Worship

Worship is becoming more culturally appropriate in music and rhythms, although these may not be native to each country itself. Growing congregations in Latin America are exchanging traditional hymns for their conceptual overdose of songs and choruses that emphasize God's existential relevance—a pattern also found in preaching and teaching.

From a theological point of view, worship may seem shallow because the goal is to inspire and motivate, inform and orient. Worship is expressed more at a sensory level than at a strictly intellectual level. When the gathered community encourages one another with stories of how God's power has been manifested in people's lives, spontaneous praise, testimonies, and expressions of joy or sorrow are natural. No doubt the main reason why worship services are longer in Latin America (an average of one-and-a-half hours, two hours in larger churches) is that it takes *time* to worship! The emphasis is on the event itself—its content—and not on the length of time it takes. When you have *worshiped,* you go home.

Oasis de Esperanza is one of the largest churches in San Jose, Costa Rica. Well over 3,000 members! Socially, many of its members would be considered distinguished people—with a supreme court judge and many highly paid professionals in the membership. Worshiping side by side are scores of trades people, upper-echelon professionals, vendors, schoolteachers, white-collar workers, and typical middle-income people. "We are one" is a prominent theme in the worship service and Christian education classes. Large congregations in Latin America are heterogeneous; they look like the society of which they are a part, in dress, music, language, social composition, and participation.

■ Multiple Churches and Groups

A study of 139 churches in five Latin American cities found that over 1,500 new congregations (small churches and missions) had been established during approximately 20 years by those original churches. Of the new congregations, 890 had become fully organized churches themselves. Moreover, these figures did not include the scores of smaller cell groups that meet during the week. Compassion for the lost is evidenced by the multiplication of as many church groups as possible.

Besides starting new churches, many congregations in Latin America conduct a wide

The integration of outwardly oriented and productive church members may become the norm if churches initiate new areas of ministry . . .

variety of home and community groups which respond to diverse spiritual and social needs. Bible study, prayer cells, evangelistic or discipleship courses, family counseling, and many other ministries are conducted in various types of small groups. Such groups often minister to people who would not otherwise participate in a large church fellowship. Small groups provide an opportunity for an increased number of interpersonal relationships under less controlled circumstances.

■ Local Training Programs

Although training programs in local churches do not operate with the same degree of formality as Bible schools, more and more churches are establishing their own. For instance, Oasis de Esperanza has its over 800 members taking courses weekly in its own Bible institute. The courses deal with almost every facet of ministry and stress the application of biblical truth in everyday life, rather than the accumulation or analysis of conceptual information. Theological "nit-picking" is not a principal concern.

Besides regular programs in such institutes, larger churches conduct periodic courses in various types of ministry, including evangelism. New believers are encouraged not only to study in such programs, but are given charge of new congregations or ministry groups. Thus they develop their own faith and knowledge as they witness, exercise their spiritual gifts, and develop leadership skills. This type of leadership training is usually conducted by one of the pastors.

SUMMARY

Within the context of rapid change, diverse values, and new spiritual challenges, the Church must set aside its partisan and divisive spirit so that it can reach as many of the lost in as many ways as possible. It needs to recast pastoral leadership by reinstating authority and responsibility. Pastors, of course, need to accept the authority to direct their congregations, first by discovering God's will themselves, and then by inspiring their congregations to find their own fulfillment in God's wishes.

The challenge of growth and diversity may be addressed by

—*Please turn to page 23.*

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Empowering Women to Lead in a Diverse Community

BY JUANITA EVANS LEONARD

The Religion section of a Midwest paper recently carried an interview with shoppers at a mall about the role of the church in their lives. Two of the responses caught my attention:

It's just natural for me to go to church. It gives me security and a feeling of being accepted among the people I want to be accepted by . . . people who have the same kind of morals my husband and I do.

Going to church was not a part of my family's life. And my father always told me so long as I know the difference between right and wrong, that was what counted in my family. As an adult, I had the choice and never picked it up—the habit of going to church.[1]

These two women, 30 years apart, help us to see the soil that those we equip for leadership will encounter. The need for organized religion in the life of the unchurched woman is only a distant idea. For the woman who has attended all her life, the church is a place of comfort and affirmation. Add to these voices women of color who, like their Anglo counterparts, have been caught in the American church's change along racial and ethnic lines.

As the Hispanic presence continues to burgeon, as Southeast Asian immigrants make their impact, and as black Americans continue to affirm their place in the collective process, new challenges to ministry steadily increase.[2]

As cities have become more diverse, a competitive attitude has developed along the lines of race and culture. These attitudes differ from the promise of the late 1950s and '60s when the civil rights movement and church leaders brought communities together with the expectation that we Americans could be an integrated society. In the midst of the movement, some people thought that we were being asked to let go of cultural distinctiveness, and in the process, alienation resulted. Why the need to deny our customs

The 'theology of love' is the core of our message.

and ways of relating in our families and communities? Why deny our histories? These questions have grown large. Old prejudices and attitudes slowly began to infect not only society, but the church as well.

To be sure, it is never a small matter when persons of differing social, racial or ethnic backgrounds meet. Unless some high purpose governs the occasion, reasonably voiced preferences will soon yield to deeper insistent prejudices, blocking trust and needed peace. . . . But there are more urgent reasons to relate to each other than there are reasonable excuses to stay apart.[3]

What follows is the experience of this pastor-activist in the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition when asked to address the above concerns with the laywomen's organization, "Women of the Church of God," in Anderson, Indiana.

The task was first to rethink our theology and history which would serve as a model to confront the ever-widening chasm between people of various races, classes, and cultures.

Mildred Bangs Wynkoop, Nazarene theologian, expressed that the "theology of love" is the core of our message. Love is understood in the Jesus model, as he employed the *Shema:* "Hear, O Israel: the Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might." And then he added, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Deut. 6:45, NRSV and Matt. 22:36, NRSV).

To this theology of love, an understanding of how love is to be lived out was found in the Book of Acts. By the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, it is promised that transformation of the person and society would take place.

Power is understood by Holiness women as power for service. Susie Stanley, president of the Wesleyan Theological Society, writes:

The scriptural foundation for belief in the empowerment of the Holy Spirit centers in the experience of Pentecost. . . . Jesus stated that power would accompany the baptism with the Holy Spirit, a power which would enable his followers to be "witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8). The power Jesus promised was for the specific purpose of equipping his followers for a ministry that would encompass the world.[4]

These crucial words confirmed for Women of the Church of God the biblical foundation for confronting the diversity issues within their own spheres of influence—the church and the community.

It was now time to act. A ten-year urban cross-cultural experiment was launched in 1987 which brought together ten culturally/ethnically diverse women leaders from five regions of the country. Each of these women had in common her commitment to Jesus Christ and a commitment to the education of women regarding the mission of Jesus.

Involvement with diversity issues was not new to Women of the Church of God. Since the early 1960s, conversations between African-American women and Anglo women had been developing through a program called DARE. Then in 1983, a cross-cultural task force brought selected African-American, Hispanic-American, Native-American, and white women of various European-American cultural backgrounds (as well as one other cultural group) together for dialogue at the national level. However, the start of the urban experiment was the first movement of a cross-cultural group of women to be confronted *together* with the chaos and challenge of the urban world.

The plan was to arrive in Chicago from all parts of the United States and find their way from O'Hare Airport to "The Olive Branch," a mission for the homeless on West Madison. Here, together, the women would live and serve—as well as study the issues of the city from a variety of culturally diverse ministries with women.

The "urban plunge" was designed in such a manner that the women's stereotypes and prejudices began to surface upon entrance in Chicago. For 72 hours, Hispanic, African-American, and white women told each other what it was like being "different" in America. They listened to each other's pain and revealed hurts never told before in "mixed" company. Together they prayed, wept, studied, and made new connections within themselves, between each other, and with the women who were their guides. As a result, their vision for the promise of ministry was enlarged. They returned to their regions to design an "urban plunge" experience for leaders of the states in their region. In turn, the state leaders committed to design similar experiences for women in their own states.

Entire communities have been affected by . . . women who have been empowered by the Spirit to act.

Six years into the project, there are stories too numerous for this page of how not only individual women have learned about love, prejudices, and redemptive social responsibility, but how entire communities have been affected by these women who have been empowered by the Spirit to act.

One woman, an inner-city principal, returned to her city and began a program for homeless families through her school. Soon the leaders of a wealthy suburban school district joined in the project. Barriers and stereotypes dropped as, together, the students and teachers began to see each other as human beings. Together they made a difference in the lives of many inner-city children and their families. The principal declared, "With God, I can help *change* attitudes and life situations!"

As we minister with women in the '90s, it is good to remember that women connect with women at all levels of society. As we equip women for leadership, it is fundamentally important to remember women love life. Women give birth and nurture life. Whether single or married, women possess a love and concern for life. Bringing racially and culturally diverse women together to explore the gospel—and their concerns for their families and neighborhoods—provides a creative catalyst for equipping women to lead in the growing diversity of today's society. ■

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Diversity: An Opportunity for Maturation or Threat of Division?

—from page 3

Dr. Taylor's pastoral experience in Central America and in Los Angeles, California, provides an experiential base from which he instructs on how to equip leaders in a diverse, multicultural church.

Juanita Leonard writes out of years of ministry experience in cross-cultural counseling and denominational-level leadership in women's ministries with the Church of God in Anderson, Indiana. Associate professor of church and society at Anderson University, Dr. Leonard raises the issue of empowering women to lead in a diverse society.

Young Lee Hertig writes about the challenge of being a Korean immigrant trained in both psychology and missiology. Her professional experience, which enabled Fuller's Schools of Theology and World Mission to bring more diversity into their faculties, is reflected in her article on the anguish of coping as a minority female leader. Dr. Hertig teaches in the area of cross-cultural ministry.

John Hall, Jr., is bicultural, having been raised in Costa Rica in a missionary family. His years of research about the diverse factors which affect church life and growth in Central and South America prepared him for the article he shares on ministry insights from Latin America. Dr. Hall teaches in the Nazarene Seminary in Costa Rica.

Charles H. and Marguerite G. Kraft bring years of ministry and academic insight together in a practical essay on how to understand and value multiethnic diversity. Strong communication skill and anthropological theory support their simple but profound instructions for ministering effectively in an intercultural setting. Dr. Marguerite Kraft teaches anthropology and gender issues in ministry at Biola University, and Dr. Charles Kraft is professor of anthropology and intercultural communication in Fuller's School of World Mission.

As we read what these distinguished authors have written, we see the need to develop relationships characterized by trust and reciprocity within today's diverse community. The equipping of contemporary church leaders requires the establishment of relationships in which the community perceives the spiritual leader's trustworthiness and competence. To empower a leader in a diverse community means to build many bridges of trusting relationships. Disciplined thought is no less important than disciplined and empathic listening. Sophisticated skill development complements mature Christlikeness. Equipped with these tools, multicultural and multiethnic diversity will no longer represent a threat of division, but will become an opportunity for spiritual unity and maturity. ■

The Changing Hands of Leadership

—from page 5

multicultural, multinational environment of America's inner cities. In addition, poverty, homelessness, drug abuse, and violence have become as American as apple pie. American churches need to relocate to places of such urban hardship. Courageous church leaders will move their congregations into these areas, and they will discover a much richer Bible as they return to it for insights into their ministry. And they will find themselves much closer to other Christians from diverse backbrounds.

All of us, as Christians, have the option and privilege of locally living out the global implications of our faith. That, ultimately, is what a *world Christian* is.

CONCLUSION

What brings all Christians together is the deep love of Jesus Christ, who has given us new life. Our lives have become an offering of thanks to Jesus, best expressed in our lifestyles of compassion toward "the least of these" in our world. Our guide is the Scripture, inspired by the Holy Spirit. Specific labels are not as important in the days ahead as we begin to fellowship with the international Christian family. We should assume a humble posture of listening to and learning from each other. All of us bring strengths and deficiencies to the *hall of fellowship* and need to understand the perspective of each other. Fear has been a strong force in keeping us apart. A love for Jesus and a desire to understand more of his truth can overcome that fear and help launch us on an exciting journey with other *world Christians* who have been saved by Calvary love. We will be surprised to discover how many *brothers* and *sisters* we have in Christ. ■

Dealing with Postmodern Diversity

—from page 10

seriousness with which we may take the historic Christian tradition? Can one take Christian convictions as a legitimate basis for participation in public discourse? The answer to this question is clear: Since there is no traditional neutral ground upon which to stand, Christians have no obligation to attempt to "translate" their worldview into neutral, universal terms. Progress toward the truth will best be made by honest and self-conscious dialogue among traditions, not by attempting to conceal or to deny convictional differences. So postmodern thought provides justification for Christians to take a bolder stand as *Christians* in public debate.

The second question is more difficult: What are church leaders to do about the diversity within their own walls? My suspicion is that the values of multiculturalism and diversity can best be achieved by avoiding two tendencies: The first is the modern relativist move: "All cultures are equal, therefore there is no truth regarding contested claims." The second tendency to be resisted is the quick homogenization of cultures. As mentioned above, productive dialogue (and, thus, one presumes, progress toward unity) depends on first recognizing different options. Differing views on relevant issues can only be understood and appreciated or criticized against the background of the traditions in which they are at home.

To illustrate options facing church leaders, consider a typical situation: I attended a conference involving Christians from a variety of denominations as well as Jews and Muslims. Conference leaders had to decide how to organize the worship. They chose to create *homogenized* services that represented none of the traditions, but instead used the "least common denominator"—the aspects of belief and practice that all shared. Another option, which *I* favor, would be to offer opportunities to participate in a variety of services that authentically represented each of the traditions. Representatives of the traditions could explain the reasons for distinctive features of their worship.

This option *takes diversity seriously*—in fact more seriously than the *homogenized* approach—while respecting the integrity of the competing traditions.

I mentioned that *a response to diversity may be the most pressing issue for our era.* So far, we have no clear answers. It may be helpful to keep two things in mind: First, if we are entering a new period in history, we should think of these issues not as something to be resolved immediately, but should expect them to be the intellectual business of the next few centuries. I have highlighted a few philosophical insights that may be of help. It remains to be seen what further resources the Postmodern Period will offer to the church. A second thing to keep in mind is that the Postmodern Period itself is only now in the making, and Christians should not wait passively to see how it will develop, but ought to seize the opportunity to contribute to its direction. ■

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Ministry Insights from Latin America

—from page 19

exciting, participatory worship services in which each participant experiences meaningful encounters with God and his or her fellow sojourners. Diversity in the worshiping congregation will also authenticate commitment to valid social and spiritual change. Instead of passive, spectator roles, congregations may be taught to take a more active part by clapping, praying out loud, holding hands, voicing *hallelujahs,* and by various postures in prayer and praise.

The integration of outwardly oriented and productive church members in ministry may become the norm if churches initiate new areas of ministry—with as many small groups as there are interests and needs—and from the start, assign new leaders to these developing ministries. Can churches in highly formalized societies establish biblical and ministerial education programs in their own churches? You bet they can—and should! ■

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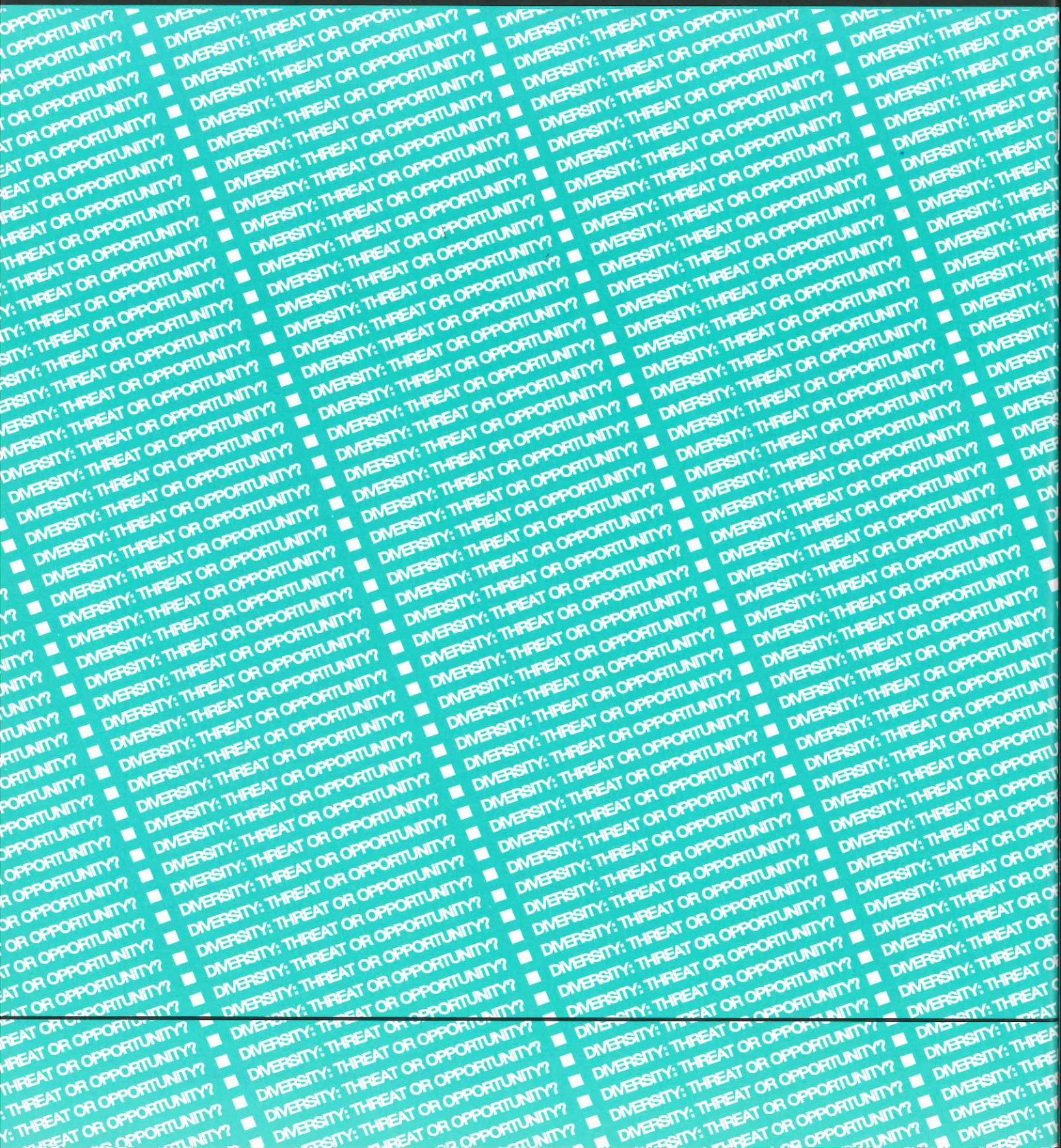
DIVERSITY: THREAT OR OPPORTUNITY?